

ELIMINATING GENDER DISPARITY IN PRIMARY EDUCATION: THE CASE OF TURKEY

WORKING PAPER



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Executive summary

The central question addressed by this policy paper is how to ensure gender parity in primary school enrolment in Turkey by 2010. This policy objective is in line with Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 2 on Universal Primary Education, and MDG 3 on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. It is also in accord with the policies of the Turkish Government.

Gender inequality in education is still a significant problem in Turkey, most pronounced in rural areas of the south-east and urban migrant settlements. Some south-eastern provinces have a female illiteracy rate of around 50 per cent. While the schooling rate has improved in recent years, in the academic year 2005/2006, the net enrolment rate of girls was still only 87 per cent – more than 5 per cent behind boys. Public expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP has been stagnant for years and Turkey, an OECD country, spends only one-fourth the OECD average per primary school student.

There are several barriers to Girls' Education, the main ones being a shortage of schools and classrooms. Schools are often situated far from home and many parents do not want their children, especially girls, to travel far. Moreover, parents do not want to send children to schools that are in a poor physical state with no toilets or running water. Many families suffer economic hardship and the traditional gender bias of families favours the needs of men and boys, often leading to girls being kept at home from school to assist in domestic chores or to help augment household income. Many parents consider the early marriage of their girls to be more important than their education. Female role models in rural communities are scarce - or entirely absent; opportunities for secondary education are rare, discouraging interest at primary level. Pre-school education is virtually absent in disadvantaged communities.

Since 2003, intensive efforts have been made to address the situation through a girls' education campaign. The campaign has met with considerable success with an additional 223,000 girls enrolled by the start of the 2006/7 school year and the gender gap reduced from around 7 per cent to 5 per cent. Significantly, the campaign has also benefited boys and an extra 100,000 have enrolled as a result of the campaign.

This paper proposes three main policy measures to resolve the problem of the non-attendance of girls at school. First, provide more schools and classrooms and experienced teachers to underserved rural and urban areas. Second, address the poverty constraint through the continuation and expansion of the cash transfer scheme to poor families on condition that their girls attend school. Third, address the male-dominated culture through convincing arguments on the importance of girls' education. Implementation of these three policy measures can bring about the twin goals of gender parity in primary school enrolment and universal primary education. Their affordability is without question in Turkey, an EU accession country, which has been experiencing an economic boom since 2002.

Resumen ejecutivo

La cuestión central planteada por este documento de trabajo es la de cómo asegurar de aquí a 2010 la paridad de género en la escuela primaria turca. Ese objetivo está en línea con el Objetivo de Desarrollo del Milenio (ODM 2) relativo al acceso universal a la escuela primaria, y con el ODM 3 relativo a la igualdad de género y a la capacitación de las mujeres. Dicho objetivo es igualmente conforme a las políticas del gobierno turco.

La igualdad de género en la educación representa todavía un problema importante en Turquía, de manera especial en las zonas rurales del sudeste del país y en los asentamientos urbanos de inmigrantes. En ciertas provincias del sudeste, el analfabetismo entre las mujeres alcanza el 50%. Mientras que la tasa general de escolarización ha mejorado en los últimos años, durante el año académico 2005/2006 la de las chicas era todavía del 87%, más de 5 puntos por debajo de la de los chicos. El gasto público en educación, en porcentaje del PIB, ha estado congelado durante años; el gasto por alumno en la escuela primaria en Turquía, un país de la OCDE, es un cuarto del gasto medio del conjunto de los miembros de esa organización.

Existen diversas barreras a la educación de las jóvenes, siendo la más importante el número limitado de escuelas y de aulas. Las escuelas están ubicadas a menudo lejos de la vivienda y muchos padres no desean que sus hijos, en particular las chicas, se desplacen largas distancias. Además, los padres no quieren enviar a sus hijos a escuelas que se encuentran en malas condiciones de mantenimiento, sin servicios o sin agua corriente. Muchas familias se encuentran en condiciones económicas muy difíciles y la cultura tradicional favorece a menudo los intereses de los hombres y de los muchachos, dejando a las muchachas en casa para ayudar en las tareas domésticas o para contribuir a los ingresos familiares. Muchos padres consideran que el matrimonio temprano de sus hijas es más importante que su educación. Los modelos de comportamiento dinámico de las mujeres en las comunidades rurales son raros o completamente inexistentes; las oportunidades ofrecidas por la educación secundaria son escasas, lo que desmotiva ya en la escuela primaria. La educación pre escolar está prácticamente ausente de las comunidades desfavorecidas.

Desde 2003, se han hecho esfuerzos para hacer frente a esta situación en el marco de una campaña para promocionar la educación de las jóvenes. La campaña ha tenido un éxito considerable con la escolarización suplementaria de 223.000 muchachas en 2006/2007, habiéndose así reducido la diferencia de género de 7 a 5 puntos. Es interesantes señalar que la campaña ha beneficiado igualmente a los chicos, de los que 100.000 han sido escolarizados como consecuencia indirecta de la misma campaña.

Este documento presenta 3 medidas para resolver el problema de la falta de escolarización de las jóvenes. Primeramente suministrar más escuelas, aulas y enseñantes experimentados en las zonas rurales y urbanas desfavorecidas. En segundo lugar, afrontar las dificultades ligadas a la pobreza continuando con el suministro de fondos en efectivo destinados a las familias pobres a condición de que sus hijas sean escolarizadas. En tercer lugar, afrontar la cultura masculina dominante a través de argumentos convincentes sobre la importancia de escolarizar a las chicas. La puesta en práctica de esas tres medidas podría permitir que se alcanzase el doble objetivo de la paridad de géneros y de la escolarización universal en la escuela primaria. Su aplicación con éxito en Turquía no debería plantear dudas en un país candidato al ingreso en la UE que disfruta de un notable crecimiento económico desde 2002.

Résumé analytique

La question centrale abordée par ce texte d'orientation est de savoir comment assurer d'ici 2010 la parité des genres dans l'enseignement primaire en Turquie. Cet objectif est en phase avec l'Objectif de Développement du Millénaire (ODM) 2 concernant l'accès universel à l'école primaire, et avec l'ODM 3 relatif à l'égalité des genres et à la promotion des femmes. Il est aussi conforme aux politiques du Gouvernement turc.

L'égalité des genres dans l'éducation représente encore un problème important en Turquie, plus évident dans les zones rurales du sud-est du pays et dans les quartiers urbains accueillant des migrants. Dans certaines provinces du sud-est, l'analphabétisme atteint parmi les femmes 50%. Alors que la scolarisation s'est améliorée ces dernières années, au cours de l'année académique 2005/2006 le taux net de scolarisation des filles était encore de 87% - soit plus de 5 points derrière les garçons. Les dépenses publiques en éducation, en tant que pourcentage du PIB, ont stagné pendant des années, et la Turquie, pays de l'OCDE, dépense seulement un quart de ce qu'en moyenne les pays de l'OCDE consacrent à un élève à l'école primaire.

Il existe plusieurs barrières à l'éducation des filles, la plus importante étant le nombre limité d'écoles et de classes. Les écoles sont souvent situées loin des maisons et beaucoup de parents ne veulent pas que leurs enfants, surtout les filles, se déplacent si loin. De plus, les parents ne veulent pas envoyer leurs enfants dans des écoles qui se trouvent dans un état délabré, sans toilettes ou sans eau courante. Beaucoup de familles se trouvent dans des conditions économiques très difficiles et la culture traditionnelle favorise souvent les besoins des hommes et des garçons, laissant de ce fait les filles à la maison pour aider aux travaux domestiques ou pour contribuer au revenu familial. Beaucoup de parents considèrent que le mariage précoce de leurs filles est plus important que leur éducation. Les modèles de référence féminins sont rares dans les communautés rurales – ou complètement absents; les opportunités offertes par l'éducation secondaire sont rares, décourageant tout intérêt dès le niveau de l'école primaire. L'éducation maternelle est pratiquement absente dans les communautés défavorisées.

Depuis 2003, beaucoup d'efforts ont été faits pour faire face à cette situation, et ceci grâce à une campagne d'éducation des filles. La campagne a eu un succès considérable avec la scolarisation supplémentaire de 223,000 filles en 2006/2007, la différence entre les genres se réduisant ainsi de 7 à 5 %. Il est intéressant de souligner que la campagne a aussi été bénéfique aux garçons puisque 100,000 de plus ont été scolarisés suite à cette campagne.

Ce texte présente 3 principales mesures programmatiques pour résoudre le problème de la non scolarisation des filles. Premièrement, procurer plus d'écoles, de classes et d'enseignants expérimentés dans les zones rurales et urbaines défavorisées. Deuxièmement, affronter les contraintes liées à la pauvreté à travers la poursuite et l'augmentation des plans d'allocation de ressources aux familles pauvres sous condition que leurs filles soient scolarisées. Troisièmement, affronter la culture de domination masculine à travers des arguments convaincants sur l'importance de la scolarisation des filles. La réalisation des ces trois mesures programmatiques pourrait conduire au double objectif de la parité entre les genres à l'école primaire et de la scolarisation universelle. Leur possibilité matérielle est certaine en Turquie, pays candidat à l'adhésion à l'UE, qui a connu un boom économique depuis 2002.

1. Introduction

1.1. Country Background

Political and Economic Conditions

Since 2002, Turkey has enjoyed a stable government and steady economic growth averaging over 7.0 per cent per year. Inflation has fallen to single figures and interest rates have declined, aided by a strong lira. Per capita GDP was US\$4,710 at current prices in 2005. The growing economy created jobs in services, industry and construction. However, wages and salaries increased only marginally in real terms. Moreover, official employment figures for agriculture fell. The population of working age grew by almost 1m, the low 49 per cent workforce participation rate was little changed and the unemployment rate stubbornly remained around 10 per cent. Many families remain dependent for their livelihoods on low-paid, informal and/or irregular work or on tenuous small enterprises such as street peddling or small farming. Limited opportunities for work affect women most: women still account for only 25 per cent of those in work, and many of these are unpaid family workers. This situation tends to perpetuate gender disparity and discrimination and raises questions about whether women and children are able to claim their share of family resources.

Turkey formally began accession talks with the EU on October 3, 2005, as planned, despite considerable opposition from politicians and public opinion in several EU member countries. The talks are expected to last up to fifteen years. They are subject to many conditions, liable to interruption and may not lead to full membership. In its 2005 annual progress report on Turkey, the EU warned that the progress made on liberal democratic reforms in recent years had slowed in 2005, citing areas such as freedom of expression, inadequate prosecution of human rights offenders, Kurdish language rights, religious minorities and military-civilian relations. Currently, a process of screening is under way to determine what changes Turkey needs to make in order to comply with EU legislation under each of the 35 headings around which the negotiations will be organised. Among the headings are agriculture and rural development; statistics; social policy and employment; regional policy; the judiciary and basic rights; justice, freedom and security; education and culture, and consumer and health protection. Screening was suspended for 8 chapters in 2006 in response to Turkey's refusal to open its ports to Cyprus, an EU member.

Social Conditions

The extent to which positive developments at the macro-level are translating into better conditions for the majority of children – and particularly for those who are socially disadvantaged due to gender, social background, geography or disability – is open to question. Gender, economic and social disparities are striking, and evidence is only now starting to be collected on child poverty, child labour and the issue of children working and living on the street. In these circumstances, there have been encouraging signs of growing sensitivity among policy and decision-makers, NGOs and the general public on topics such as gender disparities in education, the quality of education and parenting and the services provided to children deprived of parental care – even if there is as yet insufficient understanding of children's rights and child participation. Major donors, especially the EU, also clearly recognise the need to increase

investment in children. The growth of awareness and concern has contributed to legislative changes which are expected to benefit children in conflict with the law.

Demographic Shift

The population of Turkey was estimated to have reached about 73 million as of the end of 2005, and is growing by about 1.5 per cent per year – much less quickly than in the past few decades, but still much more rapidly than developed countries. Thanks to the rise in life expectancy at birth (to just under 70) and the lower birth rate, the median age of the population has reached 25, and under-fifteens now account for almost 30 per cent of the total population. Smaller families give parents the opportunity to provide for their children better. However, larger families are common in the Southeast, in rural areas and among new migrants to the cities. The population is 65 per cent urban but the pace of migration from rural areas to towns and cities and from undeveloped regions to Istanbul and to other large cities remains rapid. This poses challenges in the provision of basic services, and increases the risks that children will be neglected, exploited or come into conflict with the law.

1.2. The Millennium Development Goals in Turkey

Turkey is making progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

A low proportion of the Turkish population lives on less than a dollar a day but there are considerable economic and geographical inequalities. There is a substantial level of inequality between households in terms of incomes and expenditure, with wide variations between rural and urban areas, between regions and within the larger cities. Poverty is linked to irregular employment and low educational achievement. It has declined between 2002 and 2004 but increased in rural areas. Women are more likely to experience poverty than men and food and non-food poverty rises to 34 per cent among children with a strong correlation between household size and poverty.

Most children receive eight years of primary education but there is still some way to go to achieve 100 per cent enrolment. Some children are taught in large classes and many under-achieve. Physical facilities at schools are inadequate. The content of education and the school environment are under scrutiny. Only just over half of Turkey's children, and fewer girls than boys, attend secondary schools which do not always provide them with the skills they need even in the case of technical and vocational schools. Work will have to continue to ensure that all children, especially girls, are enrolled in school, and actually attend regularly, throughout the eight-year period of primary education. Few Turkish children receive pre-school education and access is limited by geography and gender. The budget for education appears to be falling and families often have to meet the costs of education.

Men and women are equal before the law but social norms impose many limitations on women. Women are more likely to be illiterate than men and less likely to receive higher education. They are heavily outnumbered in the world of work. There are only 2.8m women in non-agricultural employment and as many as 13m housewives. Women rarely reach the top of their professions and are under-represented in public life, politics and parliament.

Almost 30 out of every 1,000 children never reach the age of five. Infant mortality rates (26 per thousand) are falling in line with the Millennium Goals but remain quite high by international standards especially in rural areas and less-developed regions. Nevertheless, if the mortality rates continue to improve at a similar pace, then by 2015, Turkey will have succeeded in reducing its infant and child mortality rates by two-thirds between 1990 and 2015, as foreseen under the Millennium Development Goals. Most children do not get the full advantage of their mothers' milk and many other do not obtain enough iodine and micronutrients. Stunting affects 18 per cent of rural children, 21 per cent of children born after an interval of less than two years and 23 per cent of children living in the East of the country. Immunization against major diseases is incomplete. Public spending on children's health is low but new policies are on the agenda.

Maternal mortality rates have fallen (28 per 100,000 live births) but are still higher than in comparable countries. Many women give birth without skilled staff in attendance (17 per cent of live births). New policies may help to improve the attended births ratio.

The incidence of HIV/AIDS remains very low in Turkey, with only 25 AIDS cases reported in the first half of 2005 along with 150 persons testing HIV positive. These figures nevertheless suggest a slight upward trend, given that the total number affected between 1985 and 2004 was only 1,922. Due to problems in surveillance and case reporting, it is thought that the actual incidence is considerably higher, especially among vulnerable groups.

Although social indicators are improving in general, major discrepancies remain depending on education levels, region and the rural-urban divide. Similar discrepancies would also be revealed if the data were disaggregated by urban district, household size or disadvantaged groups such as the disabled. The government's MDG report for 2005 concludes that "...Turkey is on its way to achieving many of the goals... Yet the fact remains that there are still pockets of deep poverty in the country, with significant domestic structural inequality, particularly based on gender and geography. That is why we have paid particular attention to Goal 1 (eradication of poverty and hunger), Goal 3 (gender inequality), Goal 4 (child mortality) and Goal 5 (maternal mortality) as areas where Turkey appears to face significant challenges and structural barriers."

2. Problem Identification

2.1. Overview of the Situation on Gender Equality

Gender discrepancies are still present within the Turkish society and remain as one of the key stumbling blocks towards becoming a modern and a democratic state in line with EU standards. In 2005, women's employment appeared to retreat by comparison with 2004, due to a loss of unpaid family work in agriculture. Only a quarter of those in work are women. Outside agriculture, this ratio falls to about 20 per cent and has changed little since 2000. Within society, women remain vulnerable to threats such as honour killings and suicides, forced marriages and trafficking and are likely to face domestic violence and discrimination.* Patriarchal social norms still prescribe certain roles and behavior for women and girls, and impose a series of constraints on their activities. They are expected and accustomed to perform most domestic tasks, and to act in accordance with the wishes of fathers, brothers and husbands. Their education is regarded as less important than that of men. Their mobility and participation in economic and public life is

limited. When they do work or take part in public affairs, they still face many kinds of bias and exploitation. All these factors of inequality within different spheres of life contribute to the low socio-economic status of Turkish women.¹

A report *Equal Opportunities for Women and Men: Monitoring Law and Practice in New Member States and Accession Countries of the European Union* prepared by the Open Society Institute corroborate Report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women reveals the disparities women face in employment opportunities, wages, and political representation. The findings and recommendations are based on monitoring conducted by national gender equality experts and local NGO representatives in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Turkey².

The empowerment of women is widely acknowledged to be the key to development. However, women in Turkey have still to catch up in terms of education and economic independence, and their presence and influence in public life and decision-making processes remains quite limited.

Table 1: Gender Inequality in Turkey

• Women in Workforce:	25%
• Women in Parliament:	4%
• Male/Female Literacy:	95/80%
• Net Primary Enrolment ratio (2006-2007)	90.13 %
• Female	87.93 %
• Male	92.25 %
• Net Secondary School Enrolment ratio (2004)	56.51 %
• Female	52.16 %
• Male	60.71 %

Source: The Double Dividend of Gender Equality in Turkey, UNICEF Turkey, 2006

2.2. Gender Disparities in Education

Girls' attendance at primary and secondary school has been and remains lower than the attendance of boys. It is therefore hardly surprising that illiteracy among women runs well ahead of illiteracy among men. Although literacy rates have increased enormously in Republican times and continue to creep upwards, there has been no significant closure of the gap between men and women in recent years. In 2004, 95.3 per cent of males over 15 reported that they were able to read and write, but for the female population, this ratio was only 79.6 per cent, according to the Turkish Statistical Institute (Turkstat). Similar figures are found in UNICEF 2006 State of the

¹ Yakin Ertürk, "Integration of the Human Rights of Women & a Gender Perspective: Violence against Women". Report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women. Mission to Turkey.

² http://www.soros.org/initiatives/women/news/yoursex_20050502; OSI/Network Women's Program; Equal Opportunities for Women and Men Monitoring law and practice in Turkey by Nevin Senol, Ceren Isat, Aysun Sayin, Selma Acuner

World’s Children Report, where adult female literacy is rated 81 per cent compared to 96 per cent for men. Even today, it emerges, a minority of girls and young women, unlike their male counterparts, never learn to read or write. The Millennium Development Goals target for equality in literacy focuses on the 15-24 age group. Currently, the gap between male and female literacy rates, based on responses to Turkstat’s household labour force survey, is barely lower for this age group than for the population as a whole. It is envisaged that the ratio of literate women to literate men in this age group should reach 100 per cent by 2015, but for the last ten years, the ratio has hovered at around 96 per cent, and in 2005 it was put at only 95.2 per cent³.

Data on education and field observation indicate that the proportion of women remaining illiterate is much higher in disadvantaged areas such as far-flung rural regions, eastern parts of the country and poor urban settlements. According to the 2000 population census, the illiteracy rate among girls and women over the age of six was close to 50 per cent in many provinces in Southeast Turkey.

Women also constitute a minority of students in tertiary education. Among the 1.97 million students enrolled on vocational and undergraduate courses (including the Open University) in the 2004-5 academic year, 58.2 per cent were men and 41.8 per cent women. Although they are often more successful than boys in examinations, the number of girls attending universities and colleges is adversely affected by lower expectations as well as the fact that fewer girls attend secondary schools.

It is clear that the lack of opportunity in education perpetuates the lower status women still have nowadays in Turkish society.

Table 2: Women, Poverty & Education

• Female Literacy:	80%
• Poverty Rate of Illiterate Women:	44%
• Poverty Rate of Women with Primary School Education:	21%
• Poverty Rate of Women with high school education:	6.4%
• Poverty Rate of Women with university education:	<1%

Source: Turkey Poverty Study, 2004

This paper will address the main reasons and impediments affecting girls’ education, which result in lower enrolment rates as well as higher drop-out rates for girls, particularly in rural/disadvantaged areas. It will also try to identify policies that can further promote primary education and reduce the gender gap.

³ See Annex 4 on data for provincial literacy rates

3. Problem Analysis

3.1. Primary Level Education⁴

Turkey's record on access to education would be better if it were not for a significant gender discrepancy. According to the UNICEF 2006 State of the World's Children Report, net primary school enrolment is put at 89 per cent for boys, which is just above the world average, but only 84 per cent for girls, which is just below the world average⁵.

Children in mainly rural central and Eastern provinces and parts of Southeast Turkey are most likely to be out of school. According to figures published by the Turkish Statistical Institute (Turkstat - the former State Institute of Statistics), net primary schooling ratios in 2002 ranged from 100 per cent in a number of the most developed western and northwestern provinces to 63.6 per cent in the small mountainous Eastern province of Bitlis. For girls, the spread was from 100 per cent to 54.07 per cent.

Table 3: Gender ratios in Primary Education (1997-2007)

School year	Gender ratio %
1997-1998	85.63
1998-1999	86.97
1999-2000	88.54
2000-2001	89.64
2001-2002	90.71
2002-2003	91.10
2003-2004	91.86
2004-2005	92.33
2005-2006	93.33
2006-2007	94.11

Source: National Education Statistics, 2006/7

Strenuous efforts have been made to overcome discrimination in primary enrolment and attendance over the past few years. The Girls' Education Campaign ('Haydi Kizlar Okula')⁶, which began in the ten most disadvantaged provinces in 2003, was extended to all of Turkey's 81 provinces in 2006. In this campaign, the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) and UNICEF

⁴ See Annex 5 for enrollment and drop out rates; also number of pupils reaching grade 8

⁵ See Annex 1 for Comparison of Education Level of Turkey with the EU Countries.

⁶ See Annex 6 Haydi Kizlar Okula! Girls' Education Campaign Provinces According to their Inclusion Years.

have aimed to persuade families to send their daughters to primary school for the full eight years. These efforts have been backed by the payment by the off-budget Social Assistance and Solidarity Fund (SYDF) of monthly conditional cash transfers (CTT) under the World Bank-led 'Social Risk Mitigation Project' to hundreds of thousands of poor families whose children regularly attend school. Particularly in rural areas, bus services, lunches and uniforms have also been provided.

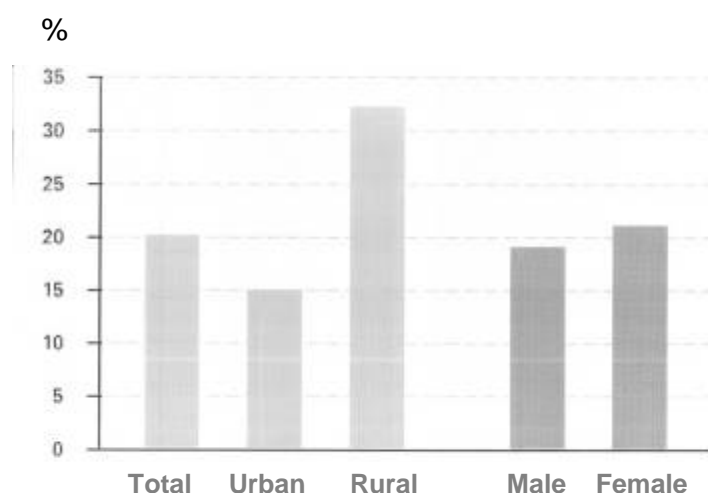
Table 4: Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) (2006/2007) Students in Receipt of CCT

	Boys	Girls
Primary & Middle School	16%	15%

Source: Social Assistance & Solidarity Funds General Directorate as of 22.03.2007

These interventions have helped increase the enrolment in primary schools of 223,000 girls and 100,000 boys who would otherwise have been out of school. Nevertheless the drop-out rate among girls in grades 6-8 remains significant.

Chart 1: Drop-out Rates until grade 8 (2003)



Source: Eđitim-Sen, 2004

Between 1998 and 2006, the World Bank provided Turkey with programme loans totaling US\$600m to support the extension of compulsory basic education to eight years, notably by constructing, renovating, extending and refurbishing extra schools and classrooms, including boarding schools and much-needed schools for children with special needs, and equipping schools with IT hardware and software. Even so, some children are studying in unsatisfactory buildings with inadequate heating and sanitary facilities. In disadvantaged rural areas, conditions

can be primitive, while fast-growing urban areas may simply not have enough schools. Many schools are still running on a double-shift system, under which some students use the premises in the morning only and others in the afternoon only.

Table 5: Primary School Enrolment (2002-2007)

School Year	Number of Students (Primary Schools)				Gender/Gap	Gender Gap	
	Boys		Girls		Total	(Boys-Girls)	%
	Number	%	Number	%			
2002-2003	5.364.577	53,17	4.725.107	46,83	10.089.684	639.470	6,34
2003-2004	5.317.435	52,66	4.781.142	47,34	10.098.577	536.293	5,31
2004-2005	5.434.557	52,81	4.855.355	47,19	10.289.912	579.202	5,63
2005-2006	5.462.522	52,53	4.936.559	47,47	10.399.081	525.963	5,06
2006-2007	5.524.624	52,32	5.034.956	47,68	10.559.580	489.668	4,64

Source: MoNE Statistics 2002-2007

3.2. Pre-School Education

Pre-school education helps children to acquire the cognitive, motor and communicative skills needed for primary school, and to prepare them emotionally and behaviorally. Children who do not receive pre-school education may fail to achieve their potential at all levels of education.

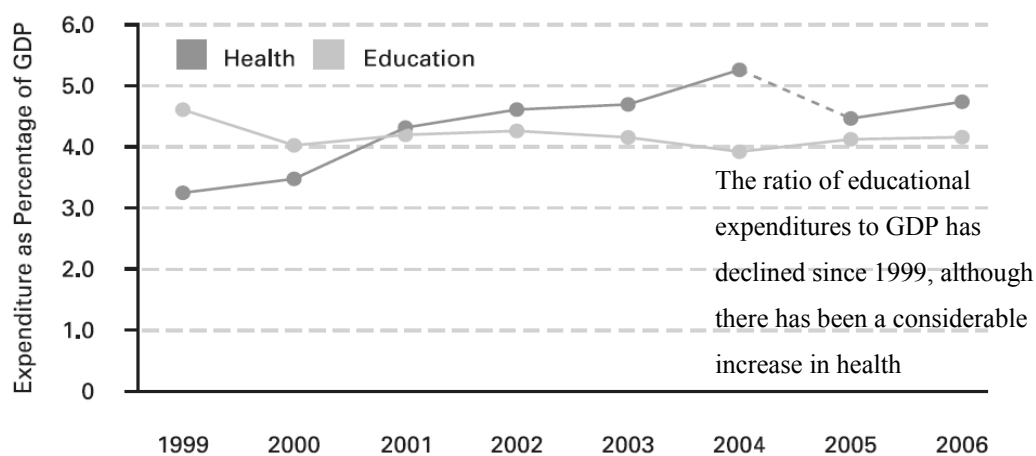
In Turkey, provision of pre-school education has increased rapidly in recent years. Nevertheless, the rate remains quite low compared to OECD countries: it covered 16.1 per cent of the 3-5 age group in 2006 with gender disparity at the expense of girls. Most pre-school education takes place in reception classes for 4-5 year-olds attached to state primary schools, but there are also public and private kindergartens and nursery classes attached to children's homes, other public institutions and agencies and private primary schools. MoNE sources say that the participation rate among 4- and 5- year-olds has reached 20 per cent.

The greatest need for pre-school education is among children from disadvantaged backgrounds, with uneducated parents, and limited opportunities for early learning experiences at home. However, demand for pre-school education is concentrated in the more fortunate strata of society, and it is most easily provided in relatively well-off urban areas with well-established primary schools able to set aside resources and facilities. Although policies have been introduced to focus on migrant communities, the disabled and other disadvantaged groups, participation in pre-school education appears to remain lowest in Eastern and Southeastern provinces. The gender gap raises its head at this level too: nationally, about 52 per cent of pre-school pupils are boys. Eventually, the government aims to make pre-school education universal and compulsory.

3.3. Budgetary Expenditure on Education⁷

In terms of allocation of funds to the Education sector, according to the World Bank, the proportion of the education spending to GDP was 6.75 per cent of GDP if private funding is included. But public spending is only 4.29 per cent of GDP while the OECD mean was 5.8 per cent of GDP. Turkey spends less money per student than any other OECD country, and only one-fourth the amount per student for primary school students compared to the OECD average. This clearly shows that Education in general, and primary education in particular, are vastly under-funded in Turkey and that the Turkish government will therefore need to supplement its investments in education. Public spending on education has been stagnant as a percentage of GDP since 1999, reflecting tight fiscal policies. Investment and maintenance expenditures seem to have been worst hit. Official projections suggest that central government budget spending on education will edge down to 3.7 per cent of GDP by 2008 even though the number of pupils continued to increase. In addition, there may be room for improvement in the ability of the budgeting and administrative systems to respond to ever-changing needs and in the way funds and other resources such as buildings are allocated.

Chart 2: Overview of Education and Health Expenditures in Turkey:



Source: Yılmaz, H. Hakan, Quality of the Fiscal Adjustment in Turkey: The Case of Social Expenditures, Presentation at the World Bank, Ankara, April 2006.

Even though basic primary school textbooks are now provided free of charge, sending a child to a state school remains expensive for low-income groups due to the costs of clothing, transport, stationery, other educational materials and so on. Parents are often asked to make donations in cash or kind to meet school needs, and to pay for extra-curricular activities and study sessions held after classes. This accentuates differences in the quality of educational provision in established areas. Children from wealthier families can also attend cramming schools and sometimes private schools (which account for 2-3 per cent of all formal education) at the expense of their own parents. A study of National Education Accounts carried out by the World Bank and Turkish Statistical Institute (Turkstat, then known as the State Institute of Statistics) in

⁷ See Annex 2 for data on education expenditures of GDP in Turkey and comparison of Education Expenditures in Selected Countries, 2005.

2004 concluded that 30.6 per cent of all spending on education in 2002 was out-of-pocket spending by families.

Companies and private citizens frequently make donations for education or to build or equip schools, with 100 per cent tax relief. Non-governmental organizations are also running many projects in the field of education, and have played an important role in the Girls' Education campaign. However, such contributions fail to compensate for low public spending.'

3.4. Obstacles to Girl's Education in Turkey

Assessments during the course of the Girls' Education Campaign have revealed the following three main obstacles to increasing girls' enrolment:

- Lack of school classrooms (or poor infrastructure) and lack of experienced teachers particularly in rural areas.

Feedback from the field during the campaign has time and again highlighted the fact that the main constraint to success is the lack of schools and classrooms in deprived rural and urban areas. Also, the school bussing situation to bring children to school in remote areas, may be unsatisfactory, especially in winter when snow may close rural roads for months. Over 60,000 pupils (37 per cent of whom are girls) are bussed to school every day. In the long harsh snowy winters of the region, roads become impassable for long periods contributing to non-attendance at school.

Parents who are persuaded to send girls to school sometimes find there is no space available at the local school where class sizes in some cases are over 100 children per teacher. The bad physical state of many schools is also a disincentive for many families to enroll their children. In Bitlis (one of the south east provinces), for example, around 40 per cent of primary schools have no toilets. Most have no water supply.

Secondary school opportunities are relatively few and far between in many provinces. For that matter, even finishing the 8 years of compulsory school can be a problem as many village schools only go to grade 5.

Teachers are almost always young and inexperienced, serving a compulsory 2-year assignment in the East following graduation. Usually they don't live in their assigned villages and don't really become part of the village community. If they did, it would mean resident role models and better follow-up on non-enrolment and non-attendance. Building teachers houses in villages is favored by many provincial and district officials as a way of addressing this issue.

The Government is aware of the need for more schools and is in fact building an extra 20,500 classrooms with funds of about \$2 billion from the "100 per cent support to education campaign" (a separate campaign which gives a 100 per cent tax credit to private and corporate donors). However, the distribution of the new schools and classrooms tends to be concentrated in areas of the country where the donors reside, which means that the poorer areas, which need them most, are usually left out.

Table 6: Poverty Rates by Gender and Educational Attainment, 2004

Educational Attainment	Total	Male	Female
Younger than 6 years	34.19	34.19	34.18
Illiterate	45.11	48.50	44.10
Primary school but no diploma	33.67	34.19	33.16
Primary school	24.36	27.50	21.55
Elementary school	25.49	25.37	25.60
Secondary/Vocational School	13.00	14.95	9.45
High/Vocational School	8.28	9.69	6.39
University	1.33	1.57	0.93

Source: Poverty Study 2004, Turkstat, op.cit.

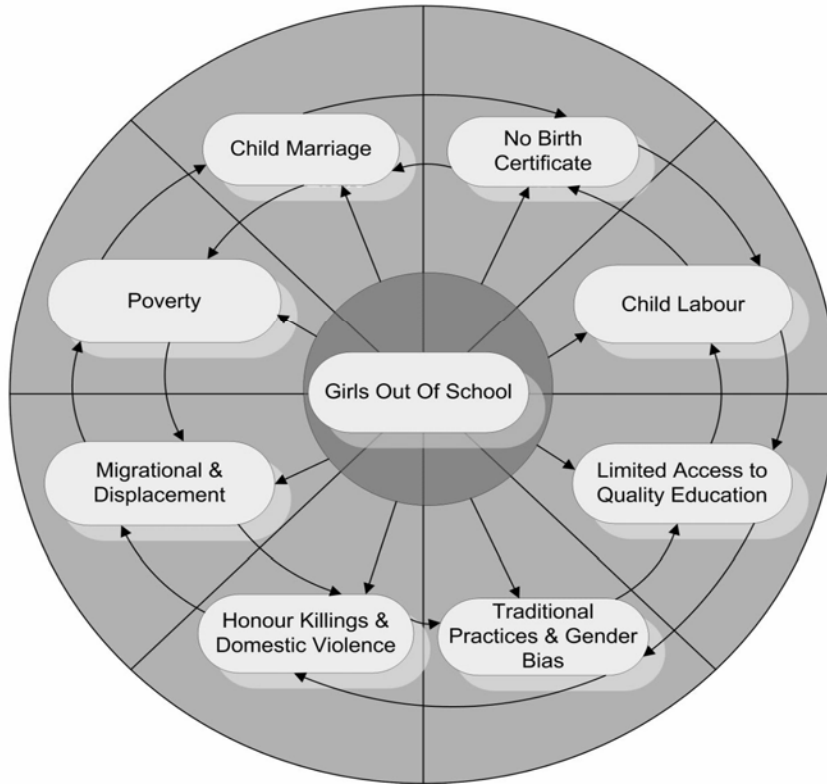
- Another reason is the male-dominated culture and patriarchal family structure which gives priority to boys over girls and which regards females as inferior to males.

Some conservative parents are unwilling to send their daughters to school, particularly beyond the age of about 11, because they do not want them to mix with boys and men at school or en route, and/or because they do not see the need for girls to attend school, given the roles which they consider it normal for girls to perform in society. Other parents are willing to send both their daughters and their sons to school, but in cases of financial difficulty, sons are given preference over daughters. Daughters are also more likely to be called on to help in the home instead of attending school.

Many men (and indeed women) do not see education for girls as very important. Marrying-off girls early is the priority. This leads to large families. Furthermore, the absence of female role models means there is little to stir aspirations among girl villagers.

Chart 4:

VICIOUS CIRCLE OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION Why Girls are out of School



Source: UNICEF Country Office, Ankara, Turkey

4. Policy options and instruments

Overall Policy Objective: To ensure gender parity in primary school enrolment by 2010.

As described on page 15, the Girls' Education Campaign (Haydi Kızlar Okula!) which was launched in 2003, has met with significant success with 223,000 additional girls enrolled as a result of the campaign. However, there still remains a gender gap of 4.6 per cent between the number of boys and girls enrolled in primary school, a figure which represents around 500,000 in absolute numbers. Even allowing for an excess of boys over girls in the 6-14 age group (which census figures suggest), girls would still trail boys by around 250,000. Based on the experience of the Girls' Education Campaign, this paper proposes three urgent policy measures to vigorously address this situation with the aim of reaching gender parity by 2010.

4.1. Policy Option One: Addressing the lack of school classrooms and experienced teachers

(a) Rapidly increase the number of school classrooms in underserved rural and urban areas.

Provide 4,000 prefabricated school buildings for the 33 provinces with the largest gender enrolment gap. Each prefabricated unit can accommodate a minimum of 40 children and a maximum of 80, if a double-shift is operated. If all units were provided, a maximum of 320,000 and a minimum of 160,000 extra children could be accommodated. The source of funding would be the “100 per cent Support to Education” fund which has so far provided 20,000 extra classrooms at a cost of \$2 billion over 4 years (i.e. an average cost of \$100,000 per classroom). Priority would be given to the provinces, districts and municipalities which are currently benefiting only marginally from the “100 per cent” fund. (See Chart 3 on page 21). Moreover, many villages with grade 5 schools have enough children to justify opening grades 6-8 and the extra costs and teachers that would entail (grade 6 upwards have subject teachers). Getting this issue resolved through the installation of extra classrooms needs to be given high priority.

The Rationale for Pre-fabricated Classrooms

- Pre-fabs are economical and cost-effective. Costing an average of \$50,000 each (i.e. half the price of a regular classroom), a prefabricated unit can accommodate 40 pupils, rising to 80 pupils if two shifts are operated. A “permanent” structure of similar size would cost at least \$100,000.
- They represent a quick solution to an urgent problem. If the money is available, all 4,000 units can be in place 6 months after placing the order.
- The capacity to quickly produce and install good quality prefabs on a massive scale exists in Turkey as was proved after the 1999 earthquake. Several companies are in the business and prices are competitive. The life expectancy of a unit can be 30-35 years, depending on care and maintenance.
- Apart from the fact that prefabs represent a fast and economical solution, management of such a project would be much easier than with traditional building contractors. It would be a question of inviting bids, placing orders and drawing up a standard contract to install a certain number of units in a given period. Supervision and quality control would be required on an ongoing basis and payment would be made only after proper inspection of the end product.
- A local government contribution can also be secured by drawing up an agreement for local authorities to bear the cost of site preparation and servicing.

For private sector donors, visibility could be assured through the placing of a permanent plaque on the completed school buildings. Official opening ceremonies could be arranged for selected units, and press conferences could be held to ensure wide publicity.

(b) Allocate more resources for routine school maintenance and repair

Contrary to directives, many schools charge parents an “unofficial” school fee. The fee seems to be a major deterrent for many poor parents since it can be as much as YTL 50 (\$30) in some places. There are many allegations and suspicions that much of the money ends up in the pocket of the

principal. However it would appear that it usually is used for legitimate purposes such as paying personnel to clean the toilets, surroundings, painting etc. MoNE makes no allocation to schools for such routine maintenance and repair, but this needs to change in order to maintain a decent learning environment and to prevent additional financial burdens falling on poor families. Additional resources for schools would obviate the need for the unofficial fee and remove one more obstacle to enrolling and keeping girls in school. Even a modest budgetary increase in MoNE's maintenance and repair budget would go a long way towards overcoming a big obstacle to the enrolment of poor children.

(c) Ensure there are sufficient experienced teachers

Another issue is the shortage of teachers in rural areas. There are plenty of teachers apparently, but they invent all kinds of excuses to avoid being deployed to remote villages with poor basic services and low quality housing. MoNE introduced a scheme to pay incentives, but it has become stalled in the Ministry of Finance who say there is no money, so the scheme has not been implemented. It now appears that it will have to await a new policy on public personnel service, due to go before Parliament sometime in the undetermined future before there is a chance of funding. However, this is an urgent matter which deserves urgent attention. The Ministry of Health has managed to get the necessary Parliamentary approval to pay incentives to health staff in remote areas. There is no reason the same cannot be done for Education. Teachers should be also deployed to ensure a one year pre-school programme in these areas as a matter of priority. Apart from the obvious benefits of school readiness, it also helps children learn Turkish and to be better able to learn once they enter first grade.

It is worth mentioning that about one-third of teachers are female. There is general consensus that more female teachers would mean more girls enrolling and attending since families would feel more comfortable having their girls taught by women. There is also a general conviction that female teachers would have greater success in persuading families to send their daughters to school. Unfortunately though, female teachers tend to be assigned to cities and towns rather than villages, presumably because male teachers are seen as better able to cope with the difficult living conditions in rural areas. This pattern should change and more incentives should be given to female teachers to work in rural areas.

4.2. Policy Option Two: Addressing poverty

Conditional Cash Transfer

The CCT (Conditional Cash Transfer) was originally funded with a World Bank loan of \$500m. It aims to assist the poorest 6 per cent of the population to mitigate the worst aspects of their poverty. Making it conditional on clinic and school attendance means it is not just a handout, but actually promotes development of the poorest by providing an incentive for health, education and early childhood development. The problem is that the poorest and least literate families, those who need it most, tend to be excluded because they do not have the capacity to fill the application forms or meet the pre-requisite of birth registration.

The Social Solidarity Fund, which implements the CCT, has offices in every district of the country, but does not have the staff capacity to do home visits to help such families. A birth registration campaign could fill that gap by using the same house-to-house strategy employed by the GE Campaign. Volunteers can help families apply for both birth registration and for the

CCT, as well as working to convince parents to send their children and especially their girls, to school.

In 2005, the CCT decided to increase the amount for girls who attend, and as a result, parents now get \$2 per month more for girls than boys. This is providing a boost to girls' enrolment and attendance. Not every home with unregistered children will be visited during the campaign, but sufficient will be visited, and sufficient CCT will flow to them, as to ensure that other poor families when learning of their neighbors new source of income will visit their local Social Solidarity Fund office to apply themselves. There, they will receive the necessary help to make the application for both birth registration and CCT. The campaign is expected to trigger this kind of response among poor families. It will thereby generate its own self-sustaining momentum.

4.3. Policy Option Three: Addressing a male-dominated culture

Convince the Population that Girls' Education is Important

The strategy employed so far to convince people that girls' education is important seems to be working. Essentially, it means house-to-house visits to persuade parents that it is in their own interest as well as the girls' interest to send her to school. A volunteer's handbook which anticipates every possible objection from parents has been developed and volunteers are fully oriented in advance of the home visits. The first 3 years of the GE campaign resulted in an extra 223,000 enrolled. So the "convincing" strategy is working. Now it needs to be institutionalized as policy with the following features:

- **Parent Participation:** Parents need to be directly involved in the dialogue on girls' education. Reluctant parents need to be encouraged to visit their local schools to get to know the teachers and to assure themselves that their daughters will be in good hands.
- **Child Participation:** In many provinces, children in the classroom have been asked to identify their siblings or friends who are not going to school. Teachers then follow up with home visits to convince the parents to send their girls or boys to school. Older children at school can also try to convince their parents to enroll younger siblings. The approach works well and should be adopted as common practice.

4.4 Affordability

Table 7: Education Sector Expenditure

Year	GDP Growth	Education Sector Expenditure as per cent of GDP
2003	5.8	4.2
2004	8.9	3.9
2005	7.4	4.1
2006	6.0	4.2
Euro 25 Average (2003)		5.0

4.2% of GDP = \$15.98 Billion at current prices

Source: Economist Intelligence Unit, 2007. National Development Plan 2007-2013.

As can be seen from Table 7, education sector expenditure has remained stagnant as a percentage of GDP since 2003, even as economic growth has boomed. While this has meant an increase in absolute terms, the extra money has been consumed by increases in teachers salaries and other recurrent costs (Table 7). The additional funding required to implement the 3 policy measures proposed in this document would add a very modest \$620m, or 4 per cent, to 2006 education sector expenditure. This would represent only a 0.1 per cent increase in education sector expenditure as a percentage of GDP - from 4.2 per cent to 4.3 per cent - still well below the EU 25 average of 5 per cent, and well affordable to the Turkish exchequer which has seen a vast increase in tax revenues in recent years as a result of the high economic growth. Turkey needs to match it's stated political prioritization of education with a commensurate increase in the budget and move gradually towards EU levels over the next few years as befits an EU- accession country.

Table 8: Extra Public Investment needed to make the polices work (2007 prices)

New Prefabs	\$200 m (One-off expenditure)
Maintenance & repairs	\$350 m
Teacher Incentives	\$ 70 m
TOTAL	\$620 m
(i.e. 4 per cent of 2006 Education Sector Expenditure)	

The costs involved in house-to-house visits as set out in the third policy proposal are already covered from a combination of the education budget and assistance from UNICEF and would not imply any extra cost.

5. Conclusion

Evidence presented in this paper shows that there is still a significant enrolment gap between boys than girls in primary school in Turkey. It is argued that three urgent policy measures can remedy this situation and ensure gender parity in primary education by 2010. This would represent a major step towards MDG Goal 3 and the achievement of Universal Primary Education by 2015 (MDG 2).

In the latest "Education for All (EFA) Global Overview Report" (UNESCO 2003), it was estimated that Turkey would be one of only 12 countries (among 128 countries which participated in the project), which will be unable to fulfill the goal of gender equality in either primary or secondary education by 2015. By adopting and funding the policy proposals presented here, the Turkish Government and the Ministry of National Education, can confound the UNESCO prediction and deliver on its commitment to gender equality in primary school by 2010, 5 years ahead of the MDG target date. The positive experiences of the Girls' Education Campaign since its launch in 2003 show that the goal is achievable.

Other shifts in education policy at both national and local level will also be required, and many are already being implemented, including improvements in the quality and relevance of education. However, the policy measures recommended here can make a dramatic impact in the short-term and, moreover, are eminently affordable. As the Girls Education Campaign has shown, programmes for girls can also benefit boys, so the policies can lead not just to gender parity, but also the achievement of universal primary education.

EU accession also requires greater attention to human development and in this regard there is no greater return on investment than basic education. However, the rate of investment needs to step up and this translates into a significantly bigger education budget. As this paper shows, even a small increase can result in significant advances towards fulfilment of the rights of all children to a basic education.

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Annexes

ANNEX 1: Comparison of Education Level of Turkey with the EU Countries

15-EU Countries	Public Expenditure on education (1999-2001)		Adult Literacy Rate (% ages 15 and above) (2002)	Combined gross enrolment ratio for primary, secondary and tertiary schools* (%) (2001-2002)
	As % of GDP			
Sweden	7.6	-	99.0	98
Netherlands	5.0	10.4	99.0	99
Belgium	5.8	11.6	99.0	111
United Kingdom	4.6	-	99.0	113
Ireland	4.3	13.5	99.0	90
Finland	6.3	12.2	99.0	106
Austria	5.9	11.0	99.0	91
Luxembourg	4.1	8.5	99.0	75
France	5.7	11.4	99.0	91
Denmark	8.3	15.3	99.0	96
Germany	4.6	9.9	99.0	88
Spain	4.4	-	97.7	92
Italy	5.0	9.5	98.5	82
Greece	3.8	7.0	97.3	86
Portugal	5.8	12.7	92.5	93
12-New EU Countries				
Slovenia	-	-	99.7	90
Cyprus	5.6	-	96.8	74
Malta	4.9	-	92.6	77
Czech Republic	4.4	9.7	99.0	78
Estonia	7.4	-	99.8	96
Poland	5.4	12.2	99.7	90
Lithuania	-	-	99.6	90
Slovakia	4.1	13.8	99.7	74
Latvia	5.9	-	99.7	87
Hungary	5.1	14.1	99.3	86
Romania	3.5	-	97.3	68
Bulgaria	-	-	98.6	76
EU Candidate Country				
Turkey	3.7	-	86.5	68
*: Some ratios are over 100 percent which resulted from addition of the pre-school education. However it enters 100 percent in the calculation of index.				

Source: Human Development Report, 2004.

ANNEX 2: Social Expenditures as a Percentage of GDP 2003-2006

	Euro 25 2003	Turkey			
		2003	2004	2005	2006
Health	6.6	4.7	5.2	4.5	4.7
Education	5.0	4.2	3.9	4.1	4.2
Social Protection	19.7	8.6	8.6	9.4	9.5
Total	31.3	17.5	17.8	18.0	18.4

Source: Emil, Ferhat, H. Hakan Yılmaz, Social Expenditures in Turkey, unpublished study 2005 and Yılmaz, H. Hakan, Quality of the Fiscal Adjustment in Turkey.

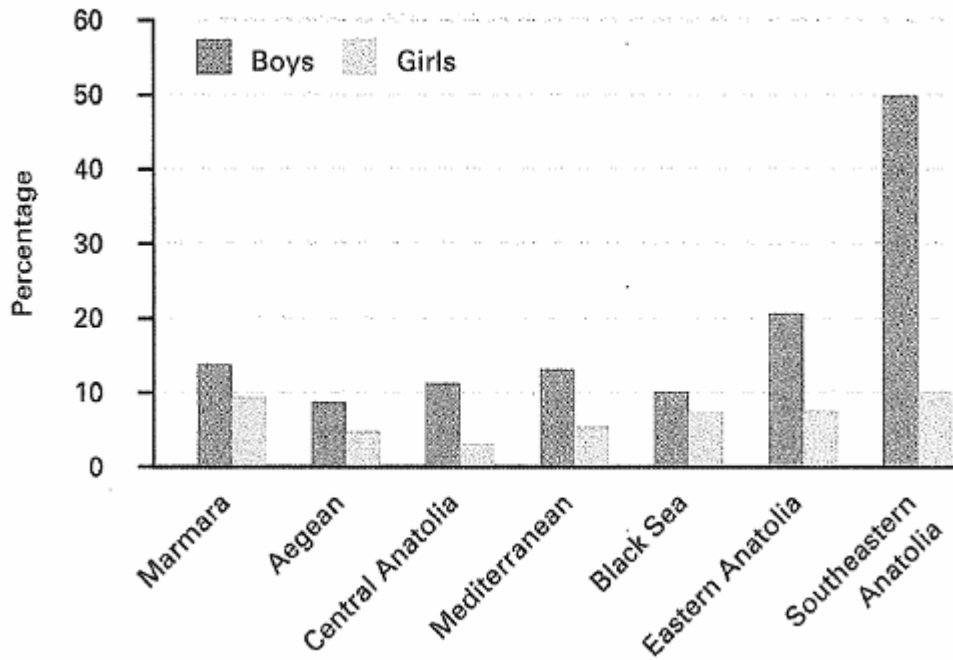
Comparison of Education Expenditures in Selected Countries, 2005

Country	Public	Private	Total
Korea	4.8	3.4	8.2
United States	5.1	2.3	7.3
Turkey	4.2	2.46	6.75
France	5.6	0.4	6.0
Mexico	5.1	0.1	5.8
Finland	5.7	0.1	5.8
United Kingdom	4.7	0.8	5.5
Germany	4.3	1.0	5.3
Spain	4.3	0.6	4.9
Czech Republic	4.2	0.4	4.6
India	4.0	0.2	4.2
Slovak Republic	4.0	0.1	4.1

Comparison as a share of GDP and percentage distribution

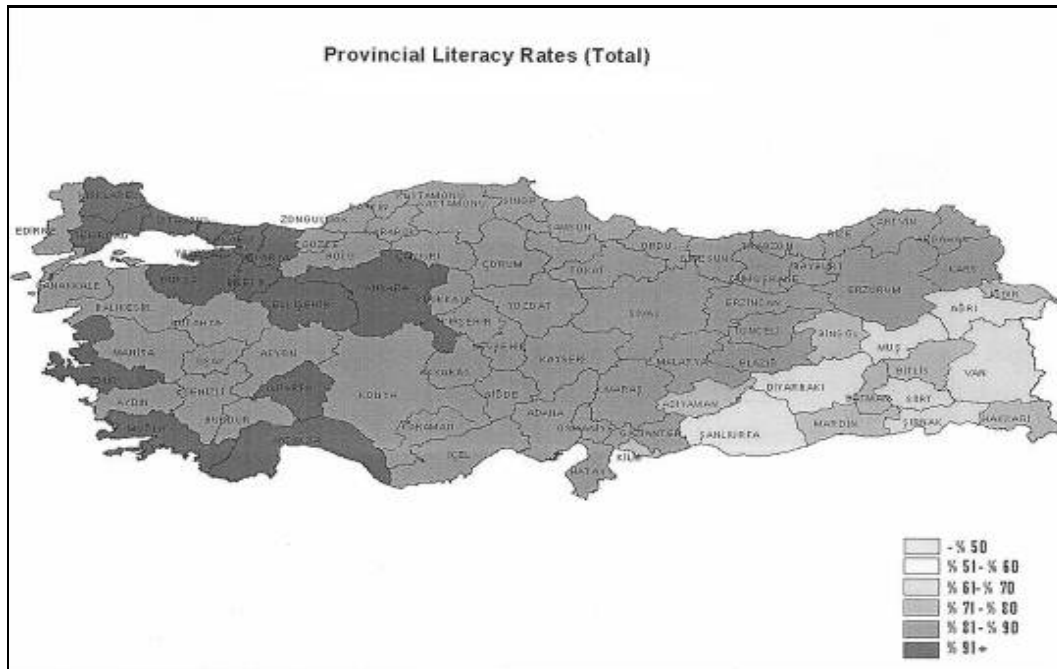
Source: World Bank, How Much Does Turkey Spend on Education? Development of National Education Accounts to Measure and Evaluate Education Expenditures, Background Study for Education Sector Study 2005, OECD, Education at a Glance 2003, Paris 2004, Yılmaz, H. Hakan, The Quality Issue of Fiscal Adjustment in Turkey's post 2000 Stability Programmes, Ph.D. dissertation (forthcoming study).

ANNEX 3: School Children Engaged in labour by Region, 1999



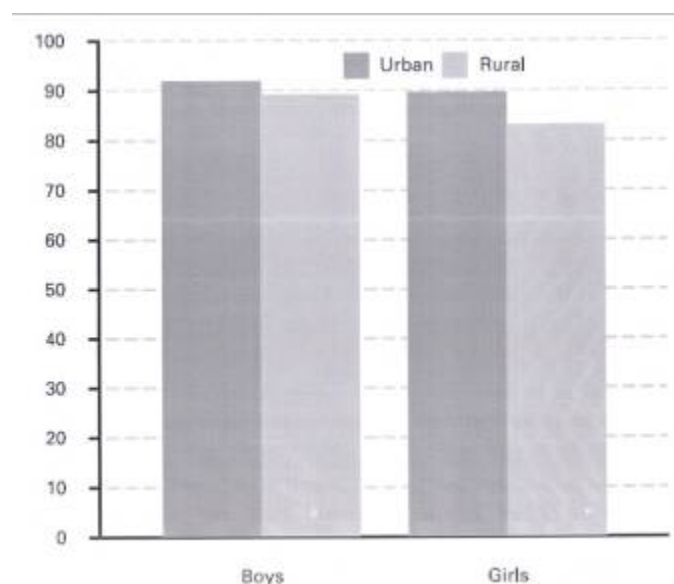
Source: Teachers' Union

ANNEX 4: Provincial Literacy Rates (Total)



Source: 2000 Census of Population

ANNEX 5: Proportion of Pupils reaching Grade 8



Source: Demographic & Health Survey, 2003

Net Enrolment Rate In Primary Education

Number of New Enrolled Students and Graduates in Primary Education in the Four Provinces where the Difference between Genders is Highest

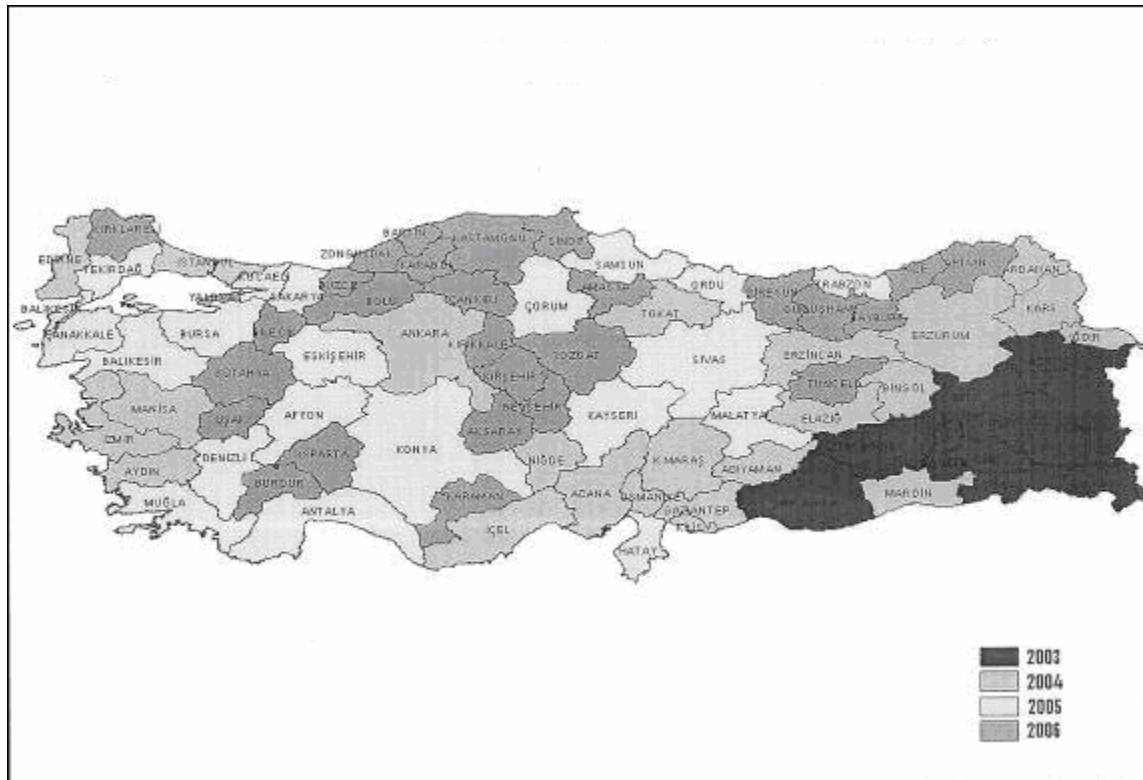
PROVINCE	Schooling Year	Number of new enrolled students					Number of graduates				
		No.			%		No.			%	
		Total	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Bitlis	1999-2000	7,815	4,900	2,915	62.7	37.3	2,191	1,690	501	77.1	22.9
	2004-2005	9,755	5,200	4,555	53.3	46.7	5,104	3,655	1,449	71.6	28.4
Muş	1999-2000	11,624	7,207	4,417	62.0	38.0	2,568	1,983	585	77.2	22.8
	2004-2005	12,755	6,671	6,084	52.3	47.7	6,105	4,474	1,631	73.3	26.7
Van	1999-2000	25,376	15,492	9,884	61.0	39.0	6,043	4,597	1,446	76.1	23.9
	2004-2005	31,322	16,805	14,517	53.7	46.3	15,290	10,763	4,527	70.4	29.6
Siirt	1999-2000	6,653	4,022	2,631	60.5	39.5	1,884	1,457	427	77.3	22.7
	2004-2005	9,272	4,840	4,432	52.2	47.8	5,198	3,536	1,662	68.0	32.0
TOTAL	1999-2000	51,468	31,621	19,847	61.4	38.6	12,686	9,727	2,959	76.7	23.3
	2004-2005	63,104	33,516	29,588	53.1	46.9	31,697	22,428	9,269	70.8	29.2

Source: Ministry of National Education

Education Year	Total	Male	Female
1997-1998	84.74	90.25	78.97
1998-1999	89.26	94.48	83.79
1999-2000	93.54	98.41	88.45
2000-2001	95.28	99.28	90.79
2001-2002	92.4	96.2	88.45
2002-2003	90.98	94.49	87.34
2003-2004	90.21	93.41	86.89
2004-2005	89.66	92.58	86.63
2005-2006	89.77	92.29	87.16

Source: MoNE, Turkey Education Statistics 2005-2006, Ankara

ANNEX 6: Haydi Kızlar Okula! Girls' Education Campaign Provinces According to Their Inclusion Years



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